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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CONAKRY 000251

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PMIL](#) [ASEC](#) [KDEM](#) [GV](#)
SUBJECT: CIVILIANS APPEAR TO CONDEMN MILITARY MUTINY

REF: A. CONAKRY 0223-0228
[1](#)B. CONAKRY 0231-0233
[1](#)C. CONAKRY 0236-0247

Classified By: POL/ECON CHIEF SHANNON CAZEAU FOR REASON 1.4 B AND D

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY. Pol/Econ staff telephoned a number of key contacts throughout the civilian sector on May 30 in order to get a sense of the public's reaction to Guinea's continuing military mutiny (reftels). Opinions were mixed. Most contacts are condemning the mutineers, but the younger generation may be more sympathetic to the mutineers' objectives, if not their methods. END SUMMARY.

LOCAL BUSINESSES

[1](#)2. (SBU) The President of a local business association that claims 15,000 members told ECON LES that the business community generally does not support the mutiny. He noted that whenever there is unrest, local businesses are prime targets for looting and other destructive behavior, and that there is no mechanism for prosecuting the responsible individuals for damages. Contact said that most businesses continue to stay closed, mostly because of the lack of access to fuel. He added that the lack of transportation is beginning to impact food distribution and availability, especially for local citizens who generally do not store food for more than a few days at a time.

[1](#)3. (SBU) A business representative in Nongo, which is near the U.S. Embassy, told Econ LES that she does not support the mutineers and blames the president, who she described as "weak," for his failure to react effectively.

[1](#)4. (SBU) An LES said that when she was in a local open air market the other day, she saw a couple of armed soldiers threatening the vendors. According to LES, one of the market ladies started yelling at the soldiers saying "Why are you stealing from us? You know where the problem is. The president is downtown. Go downtown, leave us alone."

POLITICAL PARTIES

[1](#)5. (C) The president of the opposition Union Force Republican (UFR) political party, Sidya Toure, told LES that the situation is critical. He said that the population should have gotten rid of Conte last year and if they had, Guinea would not have been faced with the current situation. Toure added that Guinea cannot afford to have an annual strike or coup. According to Toure, the situation indicates that the country does not have a legitimate head of government nor any control over the military.

¶6. (SBU) The Secretary General of the opposition Rally for the Guinean People (RPG) party, Dr. Mohammed Diane, said that no one knows what is really going on. He said that party members cannot even get together to have an internal discussion because the situation is unsafe and no one has any fuel. The president of the Union for Progress and Renewal (UPR) party, Ousmane Bah, offered little comment, saying only that the party is trying to understand what is going on before reacting.

¶7. (SBU) From the Union of Guinean People (UPG) party, party president Jean-Marie Dore said he thinks the situation will calm down today. He told LES that he was glad the Rangers have arrived and knows that they understand that their role is to protect state institutions. Before ending the call, Dore said that he fully supports the new prime minister, Dr. Ahmed Tidiane Souare.

THE YOUTH

¶8. (C) Two prominent youth leaders, both of whom are well educated and actively involved with various youth associations in the capital, came to the Embassy yesterday and met with Econoff to discuss their perspectives. According to them, this mutiny is the military version of the general labor strike of early 2007. They said that the situation was predictable and that they had been hearing about specific plans for a mutiny for more than three weeks. Contact said that the current crisis illustrates the

CONAKRY 00000251 002 OF 002

generational divide and the marginalization of Guinea's young people. He said that younger soldiers are trying to get rid of the corrupt old guard in order to reform the military and provide opportunities for the younger generation to move into leadership positions.

¶9. (C) The youth leaders said that the current mutiny is not linked to the dismissal of the former prime minister, emphasizing that Guinean youth are interested in a peaceful transition, and that they had already met with the new prime minister to advise him of their concerns and interests.

¶10. (C) ECON LES also spoke to a young student living near Kilometer 36, which marks the edge of Conakry and the gateway to the interior of the country. Contact said that he had heard shooting during the night. When asked for his opinion on the current situation, Contact said that the mutineers should continue to push the government. According to him, the important thing is to get rid of the old corrupt guard and let the younger generation start filling some of the senior positions.

CIVIL SOCIETY

¶11. (SBU) The spokesperson for the National Council of Civil Society Organizations told Pol LES that the Council's Executive Bureau is currently meeting (12:00 noon) and drafting a declaration that will publicly condemn the mutineers. Contact added that the Council will be holding a broader meeting tomorrow to discuss the political situation with its membership.

¶12. (SBU) The head of a local NGO, the Mano River Union Women's Network for Peace, told Pol LES that the situation is "very painful and difficult." A mid-level contact at the Ministry of Finance told Econ LES that the situation downtown is calm. He added that no one within the ministry supports the military's actions because soldiers have been attacking civilians.

COMMENT

¶13. (SBU) The above comments give a good indication of how the civilian population may be seeing the military mutiny. Most contacts appear to be condemning the mutineers' actions. However, the younger generation may be more understanding of the mutineers' motivations, although they may ultimately disagree with the mutineers' methods. END COMMENT.
CARTER